

CLAIMS

1. A system for providing a video-on-demand service, comprising:
a repository of video programmes;
an administration facility associated with the repository of video programmes, the administration facility having a register of authorised users of the repository;
at least one television broadcast receiver remote from the repository, the
at least one television broadcast receiver having an associated storage means;
a satellite communication channel between the repository and the at least one television broadcast receiver, the satellite communication channel being capable of carrying a television broadcast signal;
transmitter means capable of broadcasting any selected one of the video programmes in the repository along the satellite communication channel, the broadcast selected one of the video programmes being stored, at least partially, upon reception thereof, in the associated storage means; and
an activation facility responsive to a request by a registered user to enable the stored selected one of the video programmes for viewing on the television broadcast receiver.
2. A system according to claim 1 which includes a billing facility operable to bill the registered user of the system as a function of a number of stored video programmes viewed by the registered user.
3. A system as claimed in claim 1 in which the activation facility is a return communication channel operable by the registered user to access the administration facility.

4. A system as claimed in claim 3 in which the return communication channel is a terrestrial or a satellite telecommunication circuit.
5. A system as claimed in claim 4 in which the terrestrial or satellite telecommunication circuit is a leased or a dial-up telecommunication circuit.
6. A system as claimed in claim 1 in which a plurality of selected video programmes in the repository is broadcast along the satellite communication channel and stored in the storage means associated with the at least one television broadcast receiver.
7. A system as claimed in claim 6 in which the activation facility is operable by the registered user to enable any one of the plurality of selected stored video programmes for viewing on the television broadcast receiver.
8. A system as claimed in claim 6 in which the plurality of video programmes transmitted from the repository and stored in the storage means is selected at the discretion of the registered user.
9. A system as claimed in claim 6 in which the plurality of video programmes transmitted from the repository and stored in the storage means is selected according to box office ratings.
10. A system as claimed in claim 6 in which the plurality of video programmes transmitted from the repository and stored in the storage means is selected as a function of a historical viewing pattern of the registered user.

11. A system as claimed in claim 10 in which the historical viewing pattern of the registered user is determined as a function of an evaluation of any video programme after viewing thereof by the registered user.
12. A system as claimed in claim 6 in which the plurality of video programmes transmitted from the repository and stored in the storage means has a finite residence time in the storage means.
13. A system as claimed in claim 12 in which a stored video programme is erased from the storage means after effluxion of the finite residence time.
14. A system as claimed in claim 6 in which the plurality of video programmes is stored in the storage means until viewed by the registered user.
15. A system as claimed in claim 1 in which the administration facility prompts the registered user to select a replacement video programme for transmission and storage after erasure of any video programme from the storage means
16. A method for providing a video-on-demand service, comprising the steps of:
providing a repository of video programmes;
providing an administration facility associated with the repository of video programmes, the administration facility having a register of authorised users of the repository;
providing at least one television broadcast receiver remote from the repository, the at least one television broadcast receiver having an associated storage means;

broadcasting any selected one of the video programmes in the repository along a satellite communication channel to the at least one television broadcast receiver;

storing, at least partially, the broadcast selected one of the video programmes, upon reception thereof, in the associated storage means; and

enabling the stored selected one of the video programmes for viewing on the television broadcast receiver in response to a request by a registered user.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16 that includes the step of billing the registered user as a function of a number of stored video programmes viewed by the registered user.
18. A method as claimed in claim 16 in which the stored selected one of the video programs is enabled for viewing by submitting a request to the administration facility.
19. A method as claimed in claim 18 in which the request to the administration facility is submitted along a dial up telecommunication circuit.
20. A method as claimed in claim 16 which include the further steps of broadcasting a plurality of selected video programmes in the repository along the satellite communication channel and storing the plurality of selected video programmes in the storage means associated with the at least one television broadcast receiver.

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